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greater part of them, whereof we will that the mayor for the time being, shall be one from time to time for ever, that upon public summons made by the mayor for the time being, and they thereto being once gathered, or upon all and every the days of the common assemblies in their courts, at the usual days and times, according to the antient customs of the town and borough aforesaid held, that they may have full power and authority from time to time, as often and at all times when it shall seem good or expedient unto them to erect, constitute, ordain, and make such reasonable laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees and orders in writing as shall seem to them in their discretion to be both good, healthful and profitable, honest and necessary for the good ruling and governing of the said town, and of all and singular the officers, ministers, burgesses, artificers, inhabitants, and of all other residing in the said town for the time being, and also for how, and after what declaration manner or order they the said mayor, sheriffs, burgesses, and commonalty, and all and singular the other officers, burgesses, artificers, inhabitants, and all other residing in the said town, have used, carried and behaved themselves in their offices, functions, ministries, crafts, occupa-tions, and other businesses for the uttermost public good, common profit, and good government of the same town, and for the victualling of themselves, and for any other cause, matter or thing any way touching or concerning the aforesaid town, and whensoever, or how often soever as the said mayor, sheriffs, burgesses, and commonalty of the aforesaid town for the time being, or the greater part of them (as is aforesaid) have erected, made, constituted, ordained and established

such and the like laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees, and ordinances, that then likeways they shall be able of power to make, limit, ordain, and provide in form aforesaid, such and the like reasonable pains, punishments, and penalties by imprisonment, or by any other corporal punishment, or by fine, forfeiture, amercement, or by fine of money, or by both upon and against all offenders or breakers of such laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees and orders, or of any one of them as to the said mayor, sheriffs, burgesses, and commonalty of the aforesaid town, or to the greater part of them, whereof we will that the mayor of the said town shall be one, as shall seem to be most necessary, fit, and requisite for the observation of the said laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees and ordinances; and that they shall be from time to time both able and of power to execute the said pains, penalties, and punishments, and to execute the said laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees, and ordinances, and the same to command, or cause to be commanded from time to time to be put in execution, and likewise able and of power to levy, and have the said fines, amercements, forfeitures, and fines of money to the use and behoof of the said mayor, sheriffs, burgesses, and commonalty of the town of Knockfergus aforesaid, and their successors without any let or impediment either of us, of our heirs, and suc-cessors, without giving or rendering any account or any thing else unto our heirs or successors, for the same, and all such laws, statutes, and constitutions, decrees and ordinances to be made as aforesaid, we will that they be observed and kept upon such pains as in them contained, provided always that the said laws, statufes and ordinances he not contrary to the laws and statutes of ourrealm of Ireland. To be Continued.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

AN ACCOUNT OF GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B.A. WRITTEN BY DR. AIKEN, AND PUBLISHED IN THE LONDON MONTH-LY MAGAZINE, OCTOBER 1801.

ILBERT Wakefield was born on February 22, 1756, at Nottingham,

of which town his father was one of the parochial clergy. An uncommon solidity and seriousness of disposition marked him from infancy, together with a power of application, and thirst after knowledge, which accelerated his

progress in juvenile studies. In his grammatical course he passed under the tuition of several masters, the last and most respectable of whom was the Rev. Mr. Wooddeson, of Kingstonupon-Thames, to which parish his father was then removed. He was used however, to lament that he had not possessed the advantages of an uniform education at one of those public schools, which undoubtedly, whatever may be their dangers and deficiencies, effect the point at which they exclusively aim, that of laying a solid foundation for classical erudition in its most exact form. In 1772 he was entered as a scholar of Jesus-college, Cambridge; and it was ever a topic of thankfulness to him, that he became a member of that university in which the love of truth met with some encouragement from a spirit of liberal inquiry, rather than of that which was devoted either to supine indolence, or to the passive inculcation of opinions sanctioned by authority. During the first years, his attention was chiefly fixed upon classical studies, always his favourites; and he was excited only by emula-tion and academical requisitions to aim at that proficiency in mathematical knowldge which bears so high a value at Cambridge. Yet while he confesses himself destitute of a genuine taste for speculations of this kind, he scruples not to declare the infinite superiority, in point of grandeur and sublimity, of mathematical philosophy, to classic lucubrations. 1776, he took his degree of B.A. on which occasion he was nominated to the second post among seventy-five candidates; and soon after, he was elected to a fellowship of his college. In the same year he published a small collection of Latin poems, with a few critical notes on Homer, at the university press. If not highly excellent they were sufficient to establish the claim of a young man to more than ordinary acquaintance with the elegancies of literature. He had already obtained a knowledge of the Hebrew language, as preparatory to those theological studies which now became his most serious occupation; and it may safely be affirmed that no man ever commenced them with

a mind more determined upon the unbiassed search after truth, and the open assertion of it when discovered. The foundation which he laid for his inquiries was an accurate knowledge of the phraseology of the scriptures, acquired by means of attention to the idiom in which they were written. As at this time some of his most esteemed academical friends, manifested their dissatisfaction with the articles of the Church of England, by a conscientious refusal of subscription, it cannot be doubted that scruples on this point had already taken possession of his mind; and so far had his convictions proceeded, that he has stigmatized his compliance with the forms requisite for obtaining deacon's orders, which he received in 1778, as "the most disingenuous action of his whole life." If, indeed, he could receive consolation from the practice of others, there were several of his intimate associates, who by a superiority to such scruples, have since risen to opulence and distinction in the church, without betraying any uneasiness for a similar acquies-

Mr. Wakefield left college after ordination, and engaged in a curacy at Stockport, in Cheshire, whence he afterwards removed to a similar si-tuation in Liverpool. He performed the duties of his office with seriousness and punctuality; but his dissatisfaction with the doctrine and wor-ship of the church continuing to increase, he probably considered his connection with it as not likely to be durable. The disgust he felt at what he saw of the practice of privateering, and the slave-trade, in the latter place of his residence, also awakened in his mind that humane interest in the rights and happiness of his fellow creatures, which has made so conspicuous a part of his charac-The American war did not tend to augment his attachment to the political administration of his country: in short, he became altogether unfit to make one of that body, the principal business of which, in the opinton of many, seems to be, acting as the satellites of existing authority, however exerted. His marriage, in 1779, to Miss Watson, neice of the

rector of Stockport, was soon followed by an invitation to undertake the post of classical tutor at the dissenting academy at Warrington, with which he complied. He was regarded as a very valuable acquisition to this institution, and was exemplary in the discharge of his duty, and equally gained the attachment of his pupils and the friendship and esteem of his colleagues. Being now freed from all clerical shackles, he began his career as a theological controversialist; and, it must be confessed, with an acrimony of style, which was lamented by his friends, and which laid him open to the reproach of his enemies. It is not here intended to vindicate what the writer himself cannot but disapprove; but the reat and substantial kindness of Mr. Wakefield's temper, and the benevolence of his heart were such, that this apparent contradiction must be solved by his warmth of zeal in what he thought the cause of truth, and perhaps by a familiarity with scholastic debates, which rendered him in some measure callous to the use, or rather abuse of vituperative expressions from the press. In disputations by word of mouth no man was more calm and gentle, more patient in hearing, or more placid in replying; and if, in his writings, he has without hesitation or delicacy bestowed his censures, he has been equally liberal and decided in his praise. His applauses evidently came from the heart, free and unstinted, for envy did not possess a single particle in his composition; nor has he withheld them when he thought them deserved by particular laudable qualities, even in characters which he could not regard with general approbation. No man, perhaps, ever more fully gave way to the openness of his disposition in speaking the whole truth concerning men and things, unmoved by common considerations; whence it is not to be wondered at, that he frequently rendered himself more obnoxious to antagonists than the case essentially required, and roused prejudices which a more guarded conduct would have left dormant .-A sentence which, in his memoirs, he has quoted from Asgill, expresses (as it was probably meant to do) the

spirit with which he wrote. "A blunt author in pursuit of truth, knows no man after the flesh, till his chace is over. For a man to think what he writes, may be speak his prudence; but to write what he thinks, best opens his principles."

We shall not in this sketch, attempt to give an account of all his publications, many of them small in bulk and temporary in their application. The most important of his theological labours will be allowed to be those in which he employs his singular egudition in the explanation of Scripture. Of these, the first was "A New Translation of the First Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Thessalonians," printed in 1781. was followed in the next year by "A New Translation of St Matthew, with notes, critical, philological, and explanatory," 4to. a work which ob. tained much applause, and amply displayed the extent of his reading, and the facility with which his me-mory called up its reposited stores for the purpose of illustration or parallelism. At this time he likewise augmented his fund for scripture interpretation by the acquisition of various oriental dialects. After quitting Warrington, at the dissolution of the academy, he took up his residence successively at Bramcote in Nottinghamshire, at Richmond, and at Nottingham, upon the plan of taking a few pupils, and pursuing at his lei-sere those studies to which he became continually more attached. While in the first of these situations, he published the first volume of "An Inquiry into the Opinions of the Christian Writers of the three first Centuries concerning the Person of Jesus Christ," a learned and elaborate performance, but which did not meet with encouragement sufficient to induce him to proceed in the design. A painful disorder in his left shoulder, with which he was attacked in 1786, and which harrassed him for two years, interrupted the course of his employments; and he could do no more for letters during that riod, than alleviate his sufferings by drawing up some remarks upon the Georgics of Virgil and the poems of Gray, which he published with editions of those delightful compositions. As his health returned, his theological pursuits were resumed, and he again engaged in the field of controversy. He also in 1789, made a commencement of a work which promised much, as well for his reputation, as for the advantage of sacred literature. It was "an Union of Theological and Classical learning, illustrating the Scriptures by Light borrowed from the Philology of Greece and Rome." Under the title of "Silva Critica" three parts of this performance have issued from the university press of Cambridge.

The formation of a dissenting college at Hackney, which, it was hoped, by the powerful aid of the metropolis, would become both more considerable and more permanent than former institutions of a like kind, produced an invitation to Mr. Wake. field to undertake the classical professorship. With this he thought proper to comply, and accordingly, in 1790, he quitted his abode at Nottingham, and removed to Hackney, upon the plan of joining with public tuition the instruction of private pupils. He has himself informed the public that "both of these anchors failed him, and left his little bark a-gain affoat on the ocean of lite."— It is neither necessary nor desirable to revive the memory of differences between persons reality respectable and well intentioned, but under the influence of different habits and views of things. We shall confine ourselves to a remark or two.

Mr. Wakefield was a person who derived his opinions entirely from the source of his own reason and reflection, and it will not be easy to name a man who stood more single and insulated in this respect throughout life than he. Although his principles had induced him to renounce his clerical office in the church of England, and he had become a dissenter from her doctrine and worship, yet he was far from uniting with any particular class of those who are usually denominated dissenters. He had an insuperable repugnance to their mode of performing divine service; and he held in no high estimation the theological and philosophical know-

ledge which it has been the principal object of their seminaries of education to communicate. It has already been observed, that the basis of his own divinity was philology. Classical literature, therefore, as containing the true rudiments of all other science, was that on which the greatest stress should be laid, in a system of liberal education. This point he inculcated with an earnestness which probably appeared somewhat dictatorial to the conductors of the institution.

Further, in the progress of his speculation, he had been led to form notions concerning the expediency and propriety of public worship extremely different from those of every body of Christians, whether in sects or establishments; and as he was incapable of thinking one thing and practising another, he had sufficiently made known his sentiments on this subject, as well in conversation, as by abstaining from attendance upon every place of religious assembly. They who were well acquainted with him, knew of religious assembly. that in his own breast piety was one of the most predominant affections; but the assembling for social worship had for so many ages been regarded as the most powerful instrument for the support of general religion, that to discourage it was considered as of dangerous example, especially in a person engaged in the education of youth. Notwithstanding, therefore, his classical instructions in the college were received by the students almost with enthusiastical admiration, and conferred high credit on the institu-tion, a dissolution of his connection with it took place in the summer of 1791.

The subsequent publication of his pamphlet on Public Worship deprived him (as he says) of the only two private pupils he expected. From that period he continued to reside at Hackney, in the capacity of a retired man of letters, employing his time partly in the education of his own children, partly in the composition of works which will perpetuate his name among those who have cultivated literature with most ardour and success. His "Translation of the New Testament, with Notes," 3 vols. 8vo. appeared towards the close of 1791, and was

very respectably patronised. In language it preserves as much as possible of the old version. Its numerous deviations from that in sense, will be regarded as happy alterations or bold innovations, according to the pre-possessions of the reader. A long list might be given of his succeeding labours, but we shall only particularize some of the most considerable. He printed (no longer at the Cambridgepress) two more parts of his "Silva Critica" He gave a new edition, much corrected, of his "Translation of the New Testament;" and besides, proved his zeal for Christianity, by enlarging a former work "On the Evidences of the Christian religion," and by reptying to Thomas Paine's attack upon it in his "Age of Reason."

To the works of Pope, as our most cultivated English poet, and the most perfect example of that splendour and felicity of diction which is not attained without much study of the poetic art, Mr Wakefield paid particular attention. It was his design to have published a complete edition of his works; but after he had printed the first volume, the scheme was rendered abortive by Dr. Warton's edition. He however printed a se-cond volume, entitled, "Notes on Pope," and also gave a new edition of Pope's "Iliad and Odyssey." In these publications he displayed all that variety of comparison and il-lustration, that power of tracing a poetical thought through different authors, with its successive shades and improvements, and that exquisite feeling of particular beauties, which distinguish him as an annotator of the writers of Greece and Rome.

As a classical editor he appeared in a selection from the Greek tragedians, in editions of Horace, Virgil, Bion and Moschus, and finally, in his "Lucretius," a vast performance, which alone might seem the labour of many industrious years. Of his character, as a man of letters, I have been favoured with the following estimate by an able judge, the Revd. E. Cogan, of Cheshunt:

"In extent of erudition, particularly if an acquaintance with the Ori-

ental languages be taken into the account, he was perhaps inferior to no man of the present age; and they who have been considered as having had the advantage over him in some of the less important minutia of Greek literature, have probably limited their attention to fewer objects, and certainly commenced their literary course mith a more advantageous preparation. In conjectural criticism he exhibits much of the character of Bentley and Markland: men whom he esteemed according to their high deserts in that species of learning to which his own mind was peculiarly directed. these illustrious scholars, he is always learned, sometimes bold, and frequently happy. Like them he had a mind which disdained to be held in a servile subjection to authority; and in defiance of established readings, which too often substitute the dreams of transcribers for the gems of antiquity, he followed without fear, wherever reason and probability seemed to lead the way. In his earlier critical works he exhibited, amidst some errors which his riper judgment discarded, the promise of his future greatness; and even his faults were the infirmities of genius; they flowed from that ardour and enthusiasm which cannot always wait for the slow decisions of cool inquiry. I hey were faults which though they afforced a small consolation to dull malignity, did not diminish his praise in the estimation of one solid and impartial judge. His favourite study was poetry, and in an extensive acquaintance with the ancient poets, both Greek and Roman, few men since the revival of letters have equalled him, and no one ever surpassed him in the perception of their beauties. When he applies to them the hand of conjecture, he rarely fails to give new spirit and animation by his touch; and where we are obliged to dissent from his corrections, we are sometimes sorry for the credit of the poet that he does not appear to have written what the critic has suggested. He was peculiarly fond of tracing an elegance of poetical expression through the various modifications which it assumed in the hands of different writers, and

in the illustration of ancient phraseology he did not overlook the poets of his own country, with many of which he was very familiar. His great work is undoubtedly his edition of "Lucretius," a work which ignorance may despise, at which malice may carp, and hireling scribblers may rail, but which will rank with the labours of Heinsius, Gronovios, Burman, and Heyne, as long as literature itself shall live. It will share the prediction with which Ovid has graced the memory of the great poet himself,

Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Increti,

Exitio terras cum dabit una dies

Besides its critical merit it exhibits the richest display of the flowers of poetry that ever was presented to the world, and will amply reward the perusal of every man who has sensibility to relish the finest touches of human genius.

"Mr. Wakefield, even before this immortal specimen of his talents, was deservedly held in the highest estimation by the literati of Germany;—and if his honours at home have not equalled his reputation abroad, the candid mind will easily find the explanation of this phenomenon in the violence of political party, and the mean jealousy which has too often disgraced the scholars of Great Britain. The name of Bentley is connected with proof enough of the justice of this misimuation."

I shall now proceed to an incident of his lite which shall be viewed with regret by the ingenuous of all parties: the additional sensations it inspires will, of course, be different according to the particular sentiments of individuals. It has already been hinted that Mr. Wakefield, from the time of his residence at Liverpool, had begun to imbibe a detestation of that policy which trampled upon'the rights of mankind, and was founded upon unfeeling avarice and unprincipied ambition. His study of Christianity more and more convinced him that the maxims of the world and those of religion were in direct opposition: and in common with many other excellent and learned men, he became persuaded of the absolute

incompatibility of war with the christian character. He had moreover received those principles of the origin and end of government, which, however they may now be regarded, were once thought fundamental to the British Constitution, and the basis of all civil liberty. He had occasionally, in the political contests of his country, publicly expressed his opinions upon these subjects; but the French revolution was an event calculated to call forth all his ardour His sanguine temper in the cause. led him to consider it as the undoubted common cement of a better order of things, in which rational liberty, equitable policy, and pure religion, would finally become triumphant. He watched its progress with incredible interest, excused its unhappy deviations, and abhorred the combination of arbitrary power which threat-ened its destruction. It was impossible that he should refrain from employing his pen on the occasion, or that he should do it with a "cold and unperforming hand." In his "Remarks on the General Orders of the Duke of York," he had arraigned the justice of the war with France, in terms which are supposed to have exercised the utmost forbearance of the ministry. But in his "Reply to some parts of the Bishop of Lan-daff's Address," he passed those limits. From that systematic progress in restraining the free communication of political opinions which may be traced in the acts of the late ministry, it is not unreasonable to conclude, that a victim to the liberty of the press, of name and character sufficient to inspire a wide alarm, was really desired. Yet as the Attorney General solemnly protested that his prose. cution of this pamphlet was spontaneous, and solely dictated to him by the heinous and dangerous nature of its contents, it would be uncandid to call his assertion in question. A man of sense, however may be allowed to smile at the notion of real danger to supreme power, supported as well by public opinion as by every active energy of the state, from a private writer, arguing upon principles so little applicable to the practice of the world, as those of

the Gospel. Further, a man of a truly liberal and generous mind will perhaps view, not without indignation, the thunders of the law hurled upon a head distinguished for virtue and learning, without any humane allow-ance for well intentioned if misguided The attack commenced, not against the principal, who boldly and honestly came forward to avow himself, but against the agents; and the grand purport of it was sufficiently declared by the superior severity with which a bookseller was treated, who was not the editor, but only a casual vender of the work; but who had long been obnoxious as a distinguished publisher of books of free inquiry. Mr. Wakefield himself next underwent prosecution; and his sentence, upon conviction, was a two year's imprisonment in Dorchester jail. There exists no other measure of punishment in such a case than comparison, and perhaps upon the application of this rule, it will not be found inordinately severe. Two years abode in a prison is, however, a most serious affliction! it is cutting off so much from desirable existence. Mr. Wakefield, notwithstanding his natural fortitude, felt it as such.-Though from his habits of sobriety and seclusion, he had little to resign in respect of the ordinary pleasures of the world; his habits of pedestrian exercise, and his enjoyment of family comfort, were essentially infringed by confinement. He likewise found all his plans of study so de-ranged, by the want of his library, and the many incommodities of his situation, that he was less able to employ that resource against tedium and melancholy than might have been expected. One powerful consolation, however, in addition to that of a good conscience, attended him. set of warm and generous friends employed themselves in raising a contribution which should not only indemnify him from any pecuniary loss consequent upon his prosecution, but should alleviate his cares for the future support of his family. purpose was effected; and it is to be hoped that Englishmen will ever retain spirit enough to take under BELFAST MAG. NO. XXIII.

their protection men who have faithfully, though perhaps not with due prudence and consideration, maintained the noble cause of mankind against the frowns of authority.

At length the tedious period elapsed, and the last day of May, in this year, restored him to liberty. was received by his friends, many of whom had visited him in prison, with the most cordial welcome. He was endcared to them by his sufferings, and his character was generally thought to have received a meliorating tinge of mildness and moderation from the reflexions which had passed through his mind. He formed extensive plans for future literary labours, and he seemed fully capable of enjoying and benefiting that world to which he was returned: when-oh what is man !-- a fever, probably occasioned by his anxious exertions to fix himself in a new habitation, cut short all his prospects. From the first attack be persuaded himself that the termination would be fatal, and this conviction materially opposed every attempt of medicine in his favour .-He surveyed death without terror, and prepared for it by tender offices to the survivors.

It is presumed that the character of Mr. Wakefield is sufficiently developed in the preceding sketch of his life. It may however be added, that there was in him an openness, a simplicity, a good faith, an affectionate ardour, a noble elevation of soul, which irresistibly made way to the hearts of all who nearly approached him, and rendered him the object of friendly attachment, to a degree almost unexampled. Let this be placed in balance to all that might appear arrogant or self-sufficient, harsh, or irritable in his literary conduct!-His talents were rare—his morals pure-his views exalted-his courage invincible—his integrity without a spot. When will the place of such a man be supplied?

In addition to the foregoing animated account of a highly valuable and interesting character—a character which will shine conspicuously when the irritating, angry party politics of the day, to which he fell a sacrifice,

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the day, to which he fell a sacrifice, are forgotten, we are induced to add the estimate of his worth, from the pen of his friend George Dyer, in the following appropriate lines, extracted from his poem, dedicated to the memory of Gilbert Wakefield.

"Oh! well do I remember years ago, That I did wander, though long trained to thought,

Still too, too thoughtless, near thy stream oh Cam!

There first I saw the friend that now I mourn,

For near thy stream, he too, was wont to crop

The flowers of learning—I remember well,

Beneath his garb, the trappings of the schools;

I saw a form erect and slender, like
T'one early form'd to manliness of
thought,

And rigid duties; o'er his visage pale, Fair Science beam'd, and quick around his eve.

A critic archness play'd that would have seem'd

On sternness bent, and querulousness, but that

A gentleness was there, that still appear'd

To check some frowardness, which while it

Obtruded its dislikes, yet did not seem From the pure fountain of his heart to rise.

His gait was steady, firm; for much he seem'd,

As he but walk'd, to gather in his mind, Thoughts that had stray'd, or to digest with care,

The feastings of his soul in bookish hours. I knew him not—at least, I did not know The friend—I only knew of worth and wit, The zeal of industry, the love of tame, Of virtue, science, and they call'd them Wakefield.

This was his spring of life when hopes were gay,

And wishes blooming, not of honours high,

Or in the world or in the church's mart, But to secure the crown of well earned praise,

Of genius and of learning:—and he did Obtain the well-earn'd wreath, which well was worn

Through life, and with advancing years still grew.

But in the summer of his life I knew him, And call'd him friend, for in our hearts did dwell,

Some kindred likings and some kindred scorns;

The tyrant's state, the pontiff's pomp and pride,

The hireling's meanness, the debasing tricks

Of avarice, the sycophantic airs

Of danglers after wealth; ah! subjects

Of generous scorn. He had no prisonhouse; Worth, freedom, wisdom, still can walk at

large,

The bolts and bars, and walls of ada-

May intervene, the sun's athereal beam, The lightest breeze, the voice of wife of child,

And friend, and chiefest, conscience, light within.

Cheer the brave man retir'd, while mind upsoars

Thro' worlds, on worlds, beyond the reach of fear.

But I have wander'd, let me then recount The sum of life, and profit by the amount: A little learning, and a little weakness, A little pleasure, and enough of pain, A little freedom with its tale of slavery, Passions and reasons struggle where, tho'

Reason claims empire, passion governs still;

Believing much, yet doubting not a little; Till sickness comes, and with it gloom of thought—

When man quite wearied with a world perhaps,

Not moving to his mind, a foolish world, Seeks inward stillness, and his quiet down."

## ORIGINAL POETRY.

STANZAS,

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE YOUNG LADY.

O MY rack'd heart! since Erin green, From chaos rose at nature's call, What other son of Care has seen, So many of his fav'rites fall? If wrongs and cares had power to gall This heart so sorely, when consol'd; How can I live bereit of all My firmest friends, in clay now cold?